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September 18, 2006

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H. *Jefielding MD*
Director and Health Officer

SUBJECT: **PUBLIC HEALTH ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

In response to questions on what Public Health has accomplished since September 11, 2001 to be better prepared for a bioterrorism threat, a short summary is enclosed.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

JEF:lag

Enclosure

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

Bioterrorism And Public Health Emergency Preparedness - Key Points

Since 9/11 Los Angeles County Public Health has accomplished the following achievements to be better prepared for a bioterrorism or public health emergency:

Planning - In order to detect and respond to bioterrorism in a timely manner, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LAC-DPH) has achieved several milestones in its planning efforts which include:

- Developing and exercising the Strategic National Stockpile plan for Los Angeles County that allows for the receipt of lifesaving medications, antibiotics, vaccinations, and medical equipment from the federal government to the affected Los Angeles County residents.
- Conducting over 70 drills, exercises and table-tops to test and improve our ability to respond.
- Developing of specific plans to provide a response for BT agents/diseases including pandemic flu and smallpox.

Improved Capacity to Detect Bioterrorism Agents - LAC-DPH has enhanced its capability to assess and detect threats by:

- Placing full time public health experts with FBI, fire and law enforcement in a "Terrorism Early Warning Group", - now the JRIC- to aid in identifying threats to Los Angeles County.
- Replacing the County's outdated laboratory with a new facility that includes state of the art detection equipment to rapidly identify potential bioterrorism agents.
- Training additional laboratory staff so that we now staff on call 24/7/365 and within one hour of the laboratory to perform testing for chemical or biological events.
- Developing Public Health Epidemiology Rapid Response Teams to rapidly conduct investigations to identify the potential bioterrorism agents.
- Collecting and analyzing in real-time emergency room visit data, over-the-counter medication purchases, and unusual deaths.

Improvements in Capacity to Respond to a Bioterrorist Event – The Department of Public Health has accomplished the following:

- Trained over 3000 public health staff in emergency preparedness with almost 3000 of these receiving training in the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command Structure (ICS).
- Identified and assessed over 200 sites to be deployed in the distribution of medications or for alternative care/shelter.
- Developed and distributed guidelines for hospitals and doctors to aid them in treating bioterrorism agents and diseases.
- Procured and pre-positioned antibiotic, antiviral, and chemical prophylaxis throughout the County.
- Supported the establishment of a Medical Reserve Corps to deploy volunteer medical staff in emergencies.

- Developed and implemented an emergency notification system that automatically uses phones, pagers, and e-mail to distribute health alerts to key staff and partners.
- Created of the www.labt.org website as a comprehensive public health preparedness resource for the general public and agency partners.